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General Assembly

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Seventy-second session
Agenda item 99 (b)

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 4 December 2017

[on the report of the First Committee (A/72/409)]

72/38. Nuclear disarmament

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 49/75 E of 15 December 1994 on a step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat, and its resolutions 50/70 P of 12 December 1995, 51/45 O of 10 December 1996, 52/38 L of 9 December 1997, 53/77 X of 4 December 1998, 54/54 P of 1 December 1999, 55/33 T of 20 November 2000, 56/24 R of 29 November 2001, 57/79 of 22 November 2002, 58/56 of 8 December 2003, 59/77 of 3 December 2004, 60/70 of 8 December 2005, 61/78 of 6 December 2006, 62/42 of 5 December 2007, 63/46 of 2 December 2008, 64/53 of 2 December 2009, 65/56 of 8 December 2010, 66/51 of 2 December 2011, 67/60 of 3 December 2012, 68/47 of 5 December 2013, 69/48 of 2 December 2014, 70/52 of 7 December 2015 and 71/63 of 5 December 2016 on nuclear disarmament,

Reaffirming the commitment of the international community to the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world,

Bearing in mind that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction of 1972[1] and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction of 1993[2] have already established legal regimes on the complete prohibition of biological and chemical weapons, respectively, and determined to achieve a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention on the prohibition of the development, testing, production, stockpiling, loan, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, and to conclude such an international convention at an early date,

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1015, No. 14860.
[2] Ibid., vol. 1974, No. 33757.

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Recognizing the urgent need to take concrete practical steps towards achieving the establishment of a world free of nuclear weapons,

Bearing in mind paragraph 50 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, the first special session devoted to disarmament,[3] calling for the urgent negotiation of agreements for the cessation of the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear-weapon systems and for a comprehensive and phased programme with agreed time frames, wherever feasible, for the progressive and balanced reduction of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, leading to their ultimate and complete elimination at the earliest possible time,

Reaffirming the conviction of the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons[4] that the Treaty is a cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and the importance of the decision on strengthening the review process for the Treaty, the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, the decision on the extension of the Treaty and the resolution on the Middle East, adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,[5]

Stressing the importance of the 13 steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as agreed to by the States parties in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,[6]

Recognizing the important work done at the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,[7] and affirming its 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament as an impetus to intensify work aimed at beginning negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention,

Expressing deep concern that the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held from 27 April to 22 May 2015, did not reach agreement on a substantive final document,

Reaffirming the continued validity of agreements reached at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences until all their objectives are achieved, and calling for their full and immediate fulfilment, including the action plan on nuclear disarmament adopted at the 2010 Review Conference,

Reiterating the highest priority accorded to nuclear disarmament in the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly and by the international community,

Reiterating its call for an early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty,[8]

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[3] Resolution S-10/2.

[4] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 729, No. 10485.

[5] See *1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document, Part I* (NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I) and NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I)/Corr.2), annex.

[6] *2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document*, vol. I (NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II)), part I, section entitled "Article VI and eighth to twelfth preambular paragraphs", para. 15.

[7] *2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document*, vols. I–III (NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. I), NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. II) and NPT/CONF.2010/50 (Vol. III)).

[8] See resolution 50/245 and A/50/1027.

Noting the new strategic arms reduction treaty between the Russian Federation and the United States of America, in order to achieve further cuts in their deployed and non-deployed strategic nuclear weapons, and stressing that such cuts should be irreversible, verifiable and transparent,

Noting also the statements by nuclear-weapon States of their intention to pursue actions in achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, as well as the steps taken to reduce the role and number of nuclear weapons, and urging nuclear-weapon States to take further measures for progress on nuclear disarmament within a specified framework of time,

Recognizing the complementarity of bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, and that bilateral negotiations can never replace multilateral negotiations in this respect,

Noting the support expressed in the Conference on Disarmament and in the General Assembly for the elaboration of an international convention to assure non-nuclear-weapon States, without exception or discrimination, against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, and the multilateral efforts in the Conference to reach agreement on such an international convention at an early date,

Recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, issued on 8 July 1996,[9] and welcoming the unanimous reaffirmation by all judges of the Court that there exists an obligation for all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control,

Recalling also paragraph 176 of the Final Document of the Seventeenth Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held on Margarita Island, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, from 13 to 18 September 2016, in which the Conference on Disarmament was called upon to agree on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work by, inter alia, establishing an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament as soon as possible and as the highest priority, while the necessity was emphasized of starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, without further delay, on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention that sets, inter alia, a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time,

Noting the adoption of the programme of work for the 2009 session by the Conference on Disarmament on 29 May 2009,[10] after years of stalemate, and regretting that, despite substantive informal consultations in the working group on the way ahead on all items on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, as mandated by the decision of the Conference of 17 February 2017,[11] and intensive consultations by the relevant Presidents of the Conference with a view to agreeing on a programme of work,[12] the Conference did not succeed in reaching consensus on a programme of work for its 2017 session,

Welcoming the proposals submitted by the States members of the Conference on Disarmament that are members of the Group of 21 on the follow-up to the 2013

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[9] A/51/218, annex.

[10] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 27* (A/64/27), para. 18.

[11] Ibid., *Seventy-second Session, Supplement No. 27* (A/72/27), para. 15.

[12] Ibid., para. 20.

high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, pursuant to Assembly resolution 68/32 of 5 December 2013, as contained in documents of the Conference,[13]

Reaffirming the importance and validity of the Conference on Disarmament as the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, and expressing the need to adopt and implement a balanced and comprehensive programme of work on the basis of its agenda and dealing with, inter alia, four core issues, in accordance with the rules of procedure,[14] and by taking into consideration the security concerns of all States,

Reaffirming also the specific mandate conferred upon the Disarmament Commission by the General Assembly, in its decision 52/492 of 8 September 1998, to discuss the subject of nuclear disarmament as one of its main substantive agenda items,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[15] in which Heads of State and Government resolved to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving that aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers,

Underlining the importance of implementing its decision in resolution 68/32 to convene, no later than 2018, a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard,

Recalling the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on nuclear disarmament held on 26 September 2013, and the strong support for nuclear disarmament expressed therein,

Welcoming the commemoration of 26 September as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, devoted to furthering this objective, as declared by the General Assembly in its resolution 68/32 and subsequently welcomed in its resolutions 69/58 of 2 December 2014, 70/34 of 7 December 2015 and 71/71 of 5 December 2016,

Taking note of the declaration of the States members of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean on the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, in Mexico City on 26 September 2017,[16]

Expressing deep concern about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons,

Noting the successful convening of the first, second and third Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, in Oslo on 4 and 5 March 2013, in Nayarit, Mexico, on 13 and 14 February 2014, and in Vienna on 8 and 9 December 2014, and noting also that 127 nations have formally endorsed the Humanitarian Pledge issued following the Third Conference,[17]

Welcoming the signing by the nuclear-weapon States, namely, China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America, of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, in New York on 6 May 2014,

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[13] See CD/1999 and CD/2067.
[14] CD/8/Rev.9.
[15] Resolution 55/2.
[16] See A/C.1/72/2.
[17] See CD/2039.

Welcoming also the proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace on 29 January 2014 during the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, held in Havana on 28 and 29 January 2014,

Welcoming further the successful adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017,[18]

Reaffirming that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States should refrain from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons in settling their disputes in international relations,

Seized of the danger of the use of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, in terrorist acts and the urgent need for concerted international efforts to control and overcome it,

1. *Urges* all nuclear-weapon States to take effective disarmament measures to achieve the total elimination of all nuclear weapons at the earliest possible time;

2. *Reaffirms* that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are substantively interrelated and mutually reinforcing, that the two processes must go hand in hand and that there is a genuine need for a systematic and progressive process of nuclear disarmament;

3. *Welcomes and encourages* the efforts to establish new nuclear-weapon-free zones in different parts of the world, including the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons, on the basis of agreements or arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned, which is an effective measure for limiting the further spread of nuclear weapons geographically and contributes to the cause of nuclear disarmament;

4. *Encourages* States parties to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone[19] and the nuclear-weapon States to intensify ongoing efforts to resolve all outstanding issues, in accordance with the objectives and principles of the Treaty, pertaining to the signing and ratifying of the Protocol to the Treaty;

5. *Recognizes* that there is a genuine need to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in strategic doctrines and security policies to minimize the risk that these weapons will ever be used and to facilitate the process of their total elimination;

6. *Urges* the nuclear-weapon States to stop immediately the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems;

7. *Also urges* the nuclear-weapon States, as an interim measure, to de-alert and deactivate immediately their nuclear weapons and to take other concrete measures to reduce further the operational status of their nuclear-weapon systems, while stressing that reductions in deployments and in operational status cannot substitute for irreversible cuts in and the total elimination of nuclear weapons;

8. *Reiterates its call upon* the nuclear-weapon States to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time;

9. *Calls upon* the nuclear-weapon States, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument on a joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons;

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[18] A/CONF.229/2017/8.

[19] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1981, No. 33873.

10. *Urges* the nuclear-weapon States to commence plurilateral negotiations among themselves at an appropriate stage on further deep reductions of their nuclear weapons, in an irreversible, verifiable and transparent manner, as an effective measure of nuclear disarmament;

11. *Underlines* the importance of applying the principles of transparency, irreversibility and verifiability to the process of nuclear disarmament;

12. *Also underlines* the importance of the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States, in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI of the Treaty,[6] and the reaffirmation by the States parties that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons;[20]

13. *Calls for* the full and effective implementation of the 13 practical steps for nuclear disarmament contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference;[6]

14. *Also calls for* the full implementation of the action plan as set out in the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions of the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, particularly the 22-point action plan on nuclear disarmament;[7]

15. *Urges* the nuclear-weapon States to carry out further reductions of non-strategic nuclear weapons, including on unilateral initiatives and as an integral part of the nuclear arms reduction and disarmament process;

16. *Calls for* the immediate commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament, in the context of an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work, on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator[21] and the mandate contained therein;

17. *Urges* the Conference on Disarmament to commence as early as possible its substantive work during its 2018 session, on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work that takes into consideration all the real and existing priorities in the field of disarmament and arms control, including the immediate commencement of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons convention;

18. *Calls for* the conclusion of an international legal instrument on unconditional security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States against the threat or use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances;

19. *Also calls for* the early entry into force, universalization and strict observance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty[8] as a contribution to nuclear disarmament, while welcoming the latest ratifications of the Treaty, by Myanmar and Swaziland, on 21 September 2016;

20. *Reiterates its call upon* the Conference on Disarmament to establish, as soon as possible and as the highest priority, an ad hoc committee on nuclear

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[20] *2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Final Document*, vol. I (NPT/CONF.2000/28 (Parts I and II)), part I, section entitled "Article VII and the security of non-nuclear-weapon States", para. 2.

[21] CD/1299.

disarmament in 2018 and to commence negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time;

21. *Calls for* the convening, no later than 2018, of a United Nations high-level international conference on nuclear disarmament to review the progress made in this regard;

22. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-third session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

23. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-third session, under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament", the sub-item entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

62nd plenary meeting
4 December 2017